Row Mounts on JFK Book

Owl Meets Dove

Post Photo by McCarten

The Night Owl Mayor, Mrs. Judith A. V. Harlan, assistant to the Markets Commissioner, visited the pediatrics wards of two city hospitals last night. She and Eduardo Ortega, 12, are wreathed in a holiday window painting boy did at Greenpoint Hospital, Brooklyn. Story on Page 29.

Author Won't Bend, Says Give the Book a Chance

By ARTHUR GREENSPAN

The author of the controversial book on President Kennedy's assassination isn't budging in the face of Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy's threatened lawsuit, his wife told the New York Post today.

"He figures it will all die down and the book will stand on its own merits," Mrs. William Manchester said at the family's Middletown, Conn., home.

The rambling two-story house on High St. was the center of the nation-wide controversy involving Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy, Look Magazine and Harper & Row, which will publish the book.

"Bill isn't home," said red-haired Mrs. Julia Manchester at the front door of 115 High St.

"He's staying with friends, and besides, there isn't anything he can say.

"If there's going to be a law suit and it's going to be in the courts, isn't it something he shouldn't talk about? I don't know . . ."

William Manchester's "official" version of the day President Kennedy died is under strenuous attack for some of the things he plans to print that Mrs. Kennedy feels are better left unsaid.

Yesterday Manchester spoke briefly with a reporter about the forthcoming volume, "Death of a President."

"I have confidence in that book," he said. "I think it will stand on its own. I ask only that people give it a chance."

Then Manchester disappeared into the home of a Middletown friend. Julia Manchester was left to face the constantly ringing telephone and the persistent front-door bell, while a little blonde, blue-eyed girl cried plaintively in the foyer.

"Bill figures this will all blow over after the book comes out," she explained.

She rose swiftly to her husband's defense when told that at a briefing yesterday a Kennedy spokesman said that Manchester "refused to take material out and refused to disclose whether he took other parts out" of the volume.

WILLIAM MANCHESTER

"Of course not!" said Julia Manchester, explosively. "It's his bok, isn't it?"

Told the identity of the Kennedy family spokesman, she said angrily: "Oh, him? I wonder if he's read the book. Up until a few days ago, he hadn't. It's amazing how many people haven't read the book."

Julia Manchester is one of that exclusive minority, unlike Mrs. Kennedy and Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, who, have read the book.

What does she think of it? "No comment. But tell the people to read the book for themselves and make their own decision."

For several hours, dozens of phone calls disturbed the silence of the Manchester home, which is next to the Wesleyan University campus.

And at least once, husband and wife talked about requests for interviews. The decision: A statement will be issued today by Manchester. Would he come to New York to issue it in person?

"I don't know if he wants to face a press conference.

Pausing for a moment when a visitor admired the size of the home, the sweep of lawn and huge trees front and back, Julia Manchester said:

"We've been here for 12 years. And you know, this isn't New York City. This isn't even one hour from New York City. This is two hours away. It makes all the difference. The man at the service station knows who I am, and he'll still be friendly afterward."

Manchester is a permanent fellow at an advanced studies center at Wesleyan. "That doesn't mean he's on the faculty or anything like that. He doesn't even get paid.

"But you know how it is—once a fellow, always a fellow. You get invited to some nice things here at the university, where our friends are."

As she stood in the entrance of her home, a white apron tied around her waist, the blonde toddler now held in one arm to calm the crying, Julia Manchester showed her concern for her childdren.

"I hope our boy at prep school doesn't get hurt over this controversy. He'll probably get it from the boys," she said.

Then she mused: "But he's 16. He's a big boy. He can take it."

'Of Dignity': Murray Kempton's column on Page 40.

By RALPH BLUMENFELD

A "battle of giants" was predicted today between the Kennedy family and two powerful publishing empires over the fate of William Manchester's controversial book, "Death of a President."

Jackqueline Kennedy, apparently with the tactit support of Sen. Robert Kennedy, planned to file suit in Supreme Court here within 24 or 48 hours to block serialization of the book by Look magazine netx month and hardcover publication by Harper & Row in April.

Charging breach of faith, Mrs. Kennedy accuses Manchester and the publishers of flouting a "memorandum of understanding" signed by Sen. Kennedy and the author on March 26, 1964, agreeing that the book's final text would be approved by Sen. Kennedy and herself.

Former Federal Judge Simon Rifkind is Mrs. Kennedy's lawyer in the suit. Sen. Kennedy is not a complainant but he "supports" the legal action, a spokesman said.

The Senators political associates are said to be worried that the book might be politically damaging him because it depicts President Johnson as having been boorish on the flight carrying President Kennedy's body from Dallas to Washington.

Mrs. Kennedy's statement yesterday spoke of "inaccurate and unfair reference to other individuals."

But the family's spokesman dismissed any concern over the books political impact—except to say its publication date was moved up from late 1968 so that it would not be regarded as a "campaign document" should Sen. Kennedy run for President in 1972.

Drew Pearson on Kennedy and the FBI: Page 38. Also see story on Page 66.

MRS. JACQUELINE KENNEDY
Charges breach of faith.

"There is nothing in it that reflects on Bob in any way, or could possibly damage him politically,' the spokesman said, adding that Sen. Kennedy does not object to any material involving him in the book."

Jackie objects bitterly to Manchester's free use of a 10-hour interview with her, tape-recorded in early April, 1964, when she was still "in a state of grief," said the spokesman.

"She was not self-censoring but relying on his agreement not to publish anything that would be offensive to her.

"Not that there was anything improper said, but she did reveal her deepest thoughts.

"No womna would want these things disclosed to the world."

In answr to a reporter's question, he added: "There's nothing bad or anything she wouldn't tell the children." She might very well want to tell Caroline, 9, and John Jr., 6, about it when they grow up, he said. "But it's not something she wants them to read in a movie magazine."

Manchester has agreed to some deletions, but not all those requested by Mrs. Kennedy. "If she had known this would happen she wouldn't have done it," the spokesman said. "She thought she was protected, and she just did. I don't think she thinks it was the wisest thing to do."

The spokesman said the court suit will be brought within established legal precedents. Rifkind said he would seek "a variety of relief" from the defendants, including a temporary injunction restraining publication by Look and Harper & Row.

Damages for personal injury as a result of published material can be sought, but Rifkind would not say whether Mrs. Kennedy would take such action if her planned suit fails.

Sen. Kennedy wired assurance to Manchester last summer that the family would not try to block the book's publication, the family spokesman said, but this was "subject to the terms" of the memorandum which had granted the Kennedys final approval of the text.

The objectionable material is factual, the spokesman conceded —"in fact, he [Manchester] boasts about it." But it isn't "historical data on the assassination" as agreed on, he said.

Gardner Cowles, who heads Look magazine as chairman of Cowles Communications, Inc., said yesterday that to withhold the book would amount to "censorship of history."

Harper and Row said it had "done its utmost" to comply with the Kennedys' wishes and "deeply regrets their present attitude." (Harper board chairman Cass Canfield's son, Michael, was once married to Jacqueline Kennedy's sister, now Princess Lee Radziwill.)

Mrs. Kennedy said she is filing suit, "horrible as a trial will be." There was no indication whether she will be called to testify.

Voters to Franco: Si

Madrid, Dec. 15 (AP)—Generalissimo Franco emerged today from Spain's second national referendum in 30 years with smashing support for his government reorganization plans and new strength from which to negotiate Spain's future relations with the rest of Western Europe.